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## Breaking Silos

UConn professor/bioentrepreneur Dennis Wright is co-founder of the Program in Innovative Therapeutics for Connecticut's Health, or PITCH.



### Building a Fan Base

Hartford Yard Goats General Manager Tim Restall has spent the winter and early spring trying to sell the team, and tickets, to anyone who will listen. **PG. 3**

## The big 'C' in CT's bioscience ambitions: Collaboration

By Gregory Seay  
[gseay@HartfordBusiness.com](mailto:gseay@HartfordBusiness.com)

At any given time, dozens of research scientists at UConn and Yale, and at other Connecticut universities, are investigating and churning out a myriad of ideas that could someday improve health outcomes for millions worldwide.

So great is the flow of potential game-changing, wealth-building ideas for new



drugs and therapeutic treatments that the academic sector, much less the bioscience marketplace, can barely keep pace, Connecticut bioscience experts say.

The gulf is especially wide when it comes to research needed to validate a therapeutic concept so that it someday draws the attention — and wallets — of venture capitalists and pharmaceutical makers willing to shepherd it to market, a process that can consume years and tens of millions of dollars.

Connecticut, however, has taken steps to pull its largest research universities — UConn

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## WOMEN + IN BUSINESS

Special Section  
**PGS. 12-31**

Women leaders share 'keys' to success



### Promising Venture

A Hartford startup is gaining investor interest for its cloud-based software that is a mix of Facebook and Angie's List for real estate agents. **PG. 5**

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PHOTO | CONTRIBUTED

# Building a Fan Base

## Yard Goats sell baseball 'experience' to lure fans

By Keith Griffin

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It hasn't been easy to market the Hartford Yard Goats.

The team's \$63 million stadium — Dunkin' Donuts Park — is opening two months late in its inaugural season due to problems with cost overruns and project delays. There are suburbanites leery of issues like downtown traffic and parking. Attracting corporate dollars in a tentative Connecticut economy is a challenge, as is selling season tickets to what has only been a virtual stadium experience for fans.

All of that is happening amid the political melodrama over the team's very existence in the Capital City.

Since shutting down shop as the New Britain Rock Cats late last summer, Yard Goats General Manager Tim Restall and the Double-A baseball team's staff have spent the winter and early spring largely engaged in selling the team to anyone who will listen.

It's been a constant buzz of behind-the-scenes marketing.

Once it was announced in January that the team was losing 40 percent of its home games due to construction delays, the Yard Goats engaged in crisis marketing, trying to assuage concerns of ticket holders and corporate sponsors who may have questioned the season's viability.

Restall said no season-ticket holders were lost, possibly through loyalty or the fact that season-ticket prices suddenly got lower.

"We've seen an increase in season-ticket sales, which is great," he said, for the 6,100-seat stadium. The team doesn't share attendance or revenue projections.

Restall acknowledged during an interview at his temporary office on Trumbull Street in Hartford that it's not the strident fan who is going to make his team succeed. "Minor league baseball is like having a picnic and a baseball game breaks out. That explains the atmosphere of the ballpark. It's about the experience. Most people won't remember who won and lost. It's about the entertainment experience," he said.

What's going to set Dunkin' Donuts Park apart from most minor-league stadiums, Restall

said, are amenities like a 360-degree concourse; dugout suites that rent on a nightly basis to groups where guests will be sitting closer to the batter than the pitcher; and a 7,000-square-foot stadium club used for non-gameday events.

They'll ultimately measure return on their marketing investment by how the team performs at the box office and its impact on the community, Restall said.

To be successful in attracting fans, the Yard Goats will need to use all the marketing tools at its disposal, including its website, social media and the press, said Martin S. Roth, dean of the Barney School of Business at the University of Hartford. It needs to keep building awareness of the new stadium to draw in fans.

The delayed stadium opening, Roth said, might end up being a good thing.

"One of the challenges in the early season is inclement weather," Roth said.

Restall said he and his staff have been promoting the team tirelessly with the mascots (Chompers and Chew Chew) during events like the St. Patrick's Day parade in Hartford and national anthem auditions in Manchester.

Roth said there are opportunities to embrace the influx of young people moving into downtown Hartford. He said the stadium's opening works well with the cycle of summer interns and new hires starting their post-graduation careers.

"There are lots of ways of leveraging ... the more and more young people living downtown," Roth said. "They're looking for fun things to do."

He added the Yard Goats must coordinate events with large organizations to attract more fans. That includes the University of Hartford's business school. "We'll think of ways to do it that might make sense for us," Roth said, which could include events involving faculty and staff or student orientation.

Roth said marketing to groups like Hartford Young Professionals and Entrepreneurs (HYPE) would also help.

Julie Daly Meehan, HYPE's executive director, said the Yard Goats have already reached out.

"We've absolutely been in touch," she said.

*Continued* 

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## Yard Goats

"HYPE has organized an annual group outing to catch a game for years, and we definitely plan to continue the tradition in Hartford with the Yard Goats this summer."

As the home season opener approaches May 31, marketing is going to be more mainstream, with the launch of a radio, TV, print and digital ad campaign, Restall said. He didn't discuss actual dollars, but did say a 40 percent shorter season doesn't equate to 40 percent less spending on marketing.

The team has hired Mintz & Hoke in Avon and Elkinson + Sloves in Farmington to spread the word.

Jay Sloves, a partner at Elkinson + Sloves, said a lot of the focus will be on telling people how easy and affordable it will be to get to the stadium. They'll also be selling the stadium experience.

"The narrative is about the stadium, its

conveniences, its cool amenities, and, of course, parking and driving there go hand in hand," he said.

The team will be using a lot of signage to market the convenience of parking, Sloves said. Signs will be posted around downtown indicating how short a walk it is to the new stadium from various lots and garages.

"Environmental signage is going to be part of the grassroots marketing," Sloves said.

Marketing will also focus on the fact many people who already work downtown have parking. They won't need to move their cars and can just walk to the stadium. Sloves said he has timed the walk from the Church Street parking garage and he can be there in three minutes.

The team will also have to market the stadium's accessibility from I-91 and I-84 and the various ways fans can approach without using the interstates.

Probably the toughest part of the marketing right now is the ballpark, what fans will see inside, from specialty food stands like Bear's Smokehouse BBQ to self-flushing toilets and a video scoreboard rumored to be the largest in minor-league sports.

"There's nothing minor league about Dunkin' Donuts Park," Sloves said.

Yard Goats marketing has been clever and fun, Sloves added.

"We want to continue with that with the parking. We want the campaign to make you smile. We want the parking experience to make you smile," Sloves said, adding ultimately what's going to be the most effective marketing for the team is word of mouth.

"As we open the ballpark, people will get to experience it ... and share their experiences," Restall said. "That will be the best kind of marketing. All the components are very important." ■

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(Starting from left) Mike Zizzamia, front-end engineer Mohammed Nasir, Mike Pontacoloni and Nick Pontacoloni of My Home Pro Network in Hartford.

## Realty software startup sets up shop in Hartford

By Matt Pilon

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**L**ured by an early-stage investment from Connecticut Innovations, a real estate software startup recently established its headquarters in Hartford.

My Home Pro Network offers a cloud-based software that allows realty brokerages and agents to create online profiles listing their trusted contractors, attorneys, mortgage lenders and other service providers. The site has social and referral elements similar to Facebook and Angie's List, but for the realty market.

In February, My Home Pro Network moved into Park Street office space owned by business accelerator reSET Social Enterprise Trust. It's one of 21 companies currently enrolled in reSET's flagship "Impact Accelerator" program.

My Home Pro Network is already bringing in revenue and in the midst of a pre-seed round to raise \$500,000 for product development and hiring.

The company has six fulltime employees and wants to double that number by year's end, according to CEO Nick Pontacoloni, 34, who first launched the venture in 2012 with longtime friend Mike Zizzamia, 33. Pontacoloni's younger brother, Mike Pontacoloni, 29, joined the company in 2013 and has been working there full time since last year.

All three are Windsor natives, with varied backgrounds in technology marketing, real estate and education.

"We believe we could have a company that employs 100 fulltime people within three years," Nick Pontacoloni said.

### Broader market

Pontacoloni said My Home Pro Network software gives real estate agents a way to provide additional value to clients — potentially winning repeat business in the future — by acting as a referral source to contractors and other service providers. Agents can list their most trusted contractors on their profile and refer clients to the page. It's also a marketing tool for contractors listed on broker's profiles, he said.

Homebuyers can be lucrative customers. On average, buyers of new homes spend more than \$12,000 on furniture, appliances and other items in the year after closing, according to a 2008 study by the National Association of Home Builders.

An early version of the software sought to allow contractors to bid on jobs posted by property owners, but it struggled to gain traction, Pontacoloni said. The company shifted its gaze toward real estate brokers, building a networking service on top of their original job-posting and bidding platform.

It's starting to catch on. Brokers and agents from Maine to New Jersey are using the platform and related marketing services, the company said, including Keller Williams, which has created a network for its Greater Hartford agents and others.

Investors have also taken note. Connecticut Innovations, the state's quasi-public venture capital arm, is leading the ongoing pre-seed investment round, committing up to \$150,000. My Home Pro Network raised \$100,000 from angel investors in 2015, and hopes to raise a larger Series A round in the next several years.

Mike Wisniewski, a CI investment associate, said Connecticut Innovations hopes its investment, which comes in the form of a two-year note, will be converted to an ownership stake in a later equity round.

"I thought they were motivated, energetic, young entrepreneurs, but experienced," Wisniewski said of the startup's founding team. "We want to try to build our pipeline of later-stage funds with companies that have good growth potential."

Nick Pontacoloni, who has an MBA from Northeastern, has worked in sales for LinkedIn and TechTarget, while Zizzamia has worked as a real estate agent. Mike Pontacoloni has two master's degrees — one in teaching from UConn, and the other in fine arts from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

CI has released \$75,000 to My Home Pro Network so far, Wisniewski said. The startup will be required to raise at least \$75,000 on its own. For its investment risk, CI would receive an ownership stake at a discounted rate in a future equity round, he said. ■

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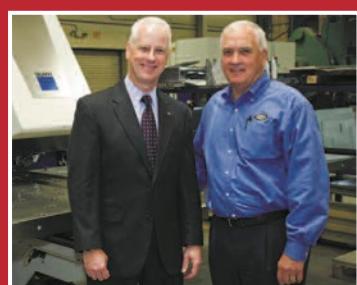


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## WEEK IN REVIEW



PHOTO / HBJ FILE

A report says the state doesn't use enough highway user fees on maintenance.

### TOP STORY

#### CT found lagging in highway investment

Connecticut spends less than 20 cents of each dollar it collects in highway user fees to build and maintain its highways, a leading state trucking lobby says.

The Motor Transport Association of Connecticut said it reached that conclusion after reviewing available data from the Federal Highway Administration.

A simple calculation of the data shows that not even 20 percent of this state's highway user fees are put into highways, MTAC President Joseph Sculley said.

"Connecticut is the worst of the 50 states in terms of putting highway user fee revenue that it collects back into highways. This needs to change," Sculley said in a statement. "If more of the highway user fees that Connecticut collects had been put into highways, it is likely that Connecticut would have more capacity, and in turn, less congestion."

Sculley said that past trends regarding infrastructure spending must be identified and analyzed before moving forward with a plan to improve infrastructure. Otherwise, he said, trends that don't make good use of taxes and fees paid by car and truck owners and operators will continue.

State policymakers and Gov. Dannel P. Malloy have discussed the possibility of a "lockbox" feature on highway user fees to fund his ambitious multi-billion-dollar proposal to upgrade the state's highways and bridges.

"Trucking companies and passenger car drivers deserve to have more of the taxes and fees they pay actually put back into the highways they drive on," he said.

The Department of Transportation did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

### REAL ESTATE

#### Home and condo sales rise; prices continue to fall

Single-family home sales climbed 29.9 percent in February, while sale prices dipped slightly. Condo sales also saw an increase in volume but decrease in price.

A total of 1,788 single-family homes sold in Connecticut during the month compared with 1,376 sold in Feb. 2015, according to the latest report from The Warren Group, publisher of The Commercial Record. This marked the highest number of sales in the month of February since 2007, when there were 1,860 homes sold. Year-to-date, sales were up 27.6 percent with 3,509 transactions compared with 2,751 during the same timeframe a year ago.

The median price of a single-family home fell by almost 1 percent in February to \$222,750 compared with \$224,900 a year ago. Condominium sales statewide posted a double-digit increase in February, climbing 18.2 percent to 493 condos sold, up from 417 the same time a year ago. The median sale price for condos in February posted a slight decrease of almost 2 percent, falling to \$150,000 from \$153,000 in Feb. 2015.

### MANUFACTURING

#### East Granby aerospace co. buys England firm

MB Aerospace, which has facilities in East Granby, has completed the acquisition of Centrax Turbine Components in England.

It is the first acquisition for MB Aerospace following recent investment from private equity partner Blackstone. Centrax Turbine, a turbine-components manufacturer part of the wider Centrax Group, will be rebranded MB Aerospace Newton Abbot. It will continue operations at its Devon, England location, where it has 430 employees.

No financial details were disclosed.

Centrax Turbine Components is a longstanding family business that makes turbine-engine components on a single site and is entering its 70th year of operation by the Barr family.

The acquisition takes the MB Aerospace Group to around 1,400 staff across the Devon location in addition to existing facilities in East Granby, Detroit, Mich., Rzeszów, Poland, and across the rest of the United Kingdom.

### ECONOMY & LABOR

#### CT entrepreneurs bullish on economy

A new survey finds Connecticut entrepreneurs are overwhelmingly bullish about starting a new business in the current economic environment.

A larger biannual survey conducted by the Entrepreneurs' Organization (EO), called the Global Entrepreneur Indicator, revealed almost 84 percent of respondents in Connecticut reported a willingness to start a business in their current economic environment.

More than half of Connecticut respondents predicted that the country's economic outlook would stay the same (51.6 percent), while 25.8 percent predicted improvement and 22.6 percent predicted deterioration.

The survey — conducted in February — predicts the economic outlook and business landscapes, among other statistics, designed to identify economic trends in Connecticut as well as globally.

### CT posts private-sector job growth

Connecticut saw private-sector job growth in March on par with the rest of New England, according to figures released by ADP in its monthly regional employment report.

The report, in collaboration with Moody's Analytics Inc., said Connecticut's private sector added 1,600 positions, or grew 0.11 percent, from February 2016 to March 2016. New England private-sector, non-farm employment grew by 7,000 jobs or 0.11 percent.

### CT 2015 exports drop

Connecticut's exports dropped last year for the first time since 2009, based on a weaker global economy and a stronger U.S. dollar that made products more expensive for foreign buyers.

Connecticut's commodity exports totaled \$15.25 billion, a 4.24 percent decrease from the \$15.93 billion registered in 2014. That decrease was well below the overall U.S. decrease of 7.15 percent, according to U.S. Commerce Department data.

### BANKING & FINANCE

#### 30% of bank jobs under threat

Digital disruption is turning finance on its head — and destroying tons of traditional banking jobs along the way.

A wave of innovation has made it possible for people to get their banking done without walking into a branch if they don't want to. People can now deposit checks using a smartphone or digitally fire off cash to friends using Venmo.

The end result is a pretty sweet experience for consumers, but an imminent threat to people who work at bank branches.

The downsizing of the bank workforce is about to accelerate as more technology takes over jobs humans used to do, according to a new Citigroup report. Another 30 percent of bank jobs could be lost between 2015 and 2025, mainly due to retail banking automation, Citi warned.

### GOVERNMENT, POLITICS & LAW

#### CT taxpayers have 7th worst return on investment

Connecticut taxpayers rank 43rd in the nation when it comes to return on taxes paid, according to a new national study.

The ranking, supplied by WalletHub, could be worse. The state is ranked fourth worst in the country for overall per-capita taxes. That figure is offset by its seventh-best ranking for overall government services.

Connecticut's effective state and local tax rate on the median U.S. household income was 13.48 percent for an average of \$7,262. According to Wallet Hub, Connecticut is ranked first nationally for water quality and No. 4 for percent of residents in poverty.

New Hampshire is considered the best state in the nation for return on investment. Its total per-capita tax rate is first with an overall government services ranking of 15.

Wallet Hub, a personal finance website, determines its rankings by contrasting state and local tax rates with the quality of the services provided within the following five categories: education, health, safety, economy and infrastructure and pollution.

### ENERGY

#### Eversource CEO to retire

Eversource Energy said its president and chief executive officer Tom May will retire next month and become the company's non-executive board chairman.

Jim Judge, the company's chief financial officer, will succeed May as president and CEO May 4, after Eversource's annual meeting.

Eversource is co-headquartered in Hartford and Boston.

# Shared ideas, resources a hallmark

and Yale — out of their “silos” and promote collaboration between them and the broader marketplace to elevate the prospects for success in its bioscience ecosystem. The ultimate aim, supporters say, is to retain as many of the technologies and other intellectual property they create, and the startups they generate, at home in this state.

In January, for example, UConn and Yale formally launched their bioscience collaboration, Program in Innovative Therapeutics for Connecticut’s Health, or PITCH.

According to its backers, PITCH and other formal and informal academic and public-private collaborations, are hallmarks of Connecticut’s bioscience ambitions to move more research out of labs and into commercialized, potentially life-saving products.

Dennis Wright, professor of medicinal chemistry at UConn’s School of Pharmacy, who teamed with Yale University biochemist-bioentrepreneur Craig M. Crews, said the latest collaboration model supplants the old one in which college scientists publish their research, then hope it draws attention of an investor or drug maker with pockets deep enough to evolve and test the research into a marketable drug.

PITCH, launched about 18 months ago with \$10 million in startup funding through the state’s Bioscience Innovation Fund, aims to shorten the time needed to validate whether UConn and Yale investigators’ basic research is marketable, Wright said.

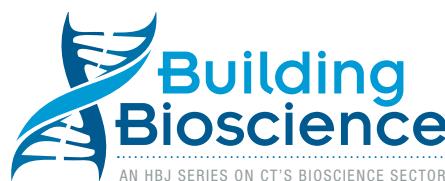
“The state, through that fund, is acting very strategically,” said Wright, who has previously launched a pair of bioscience startups of his own. “It reflects an evolving landscape where you can pull all of these resources in the state together and create a powerful engine for growth in biotech.”

PITCH is but the latest example of Yale and UConn’s collaborative bent, said Susan Froshauer, a bioentrepreneur who is CEO of Connecticut United for Research Excellence, or CURE.

Yale’s School of Medicine, for instance, has opened its Center for Biomedical Interventional



James G. Boyle, co-founder and Managing Director, Yale Entrepreneurial Institute



AN HBJ SERIES ON CT’S BIOSCIENCE SECTOR

Technology (CBIT). The center’s mission is to bring together, Froshauer said, faculty and students interested in starting companies that improve health care via new medical devices and information technology. Mentors and Yale and UConn faculty serve the program that also provides educational events and offers grant opportunities, she said.

Leveraging UConn’s strength in engineering, CBIT also holds “hackathon events” to stimulate development of these new health-care devices, Froshauer said.

“These are weekend-long sessions, where entrepreneurs from across the state, convene to percolate ideas and pop-up new mixes of teams, and pitch possibilities for startups,” she said. “The diverse and highly engaged teams are judged by members of the statewide community. It is lively and fun, and some exciting new ideas circulate to the top.”

## Small ventures

The birthing and financing of bioscience and other tech startups is another area in which silos are falling. Take the Yale Entrepreneurial Institute (YEI), born in 2008 to grubstake and nurture a wide range of bioscience and “green-technology” ventures generated by Yale faculty and pupils.

Two years ago, YEI partnered with Connecticut Innovations Inc. (CI) and First Niagara Bank to create the YEI Innovation Fund. Since January 2014, the fund has provided early-stage funding of \$100,000 apiece to 10 ventures. That fund’s recipients leveraged the \$1 million into \$21 million more of private equity, according to YEI co-founder and Managing Director James G. Boyle.

It’s too soon to gauge the fruits of the YEI Innovation Fund, Boyle said. However, the institute’s value has been to expose entrepreneurial Yale pupils to hands-on learning beyond the classroom, he said. According to YEI’s homepage, its more than 80 portfolio startups have raised more than \$135 million in funding and created more than 350 jobs.

“It was at CI’s suggestion that the fund was created in the first place,” said Boyle, an alum who previously oversaw licensing

## CT’s Bioscience Resources

A partial list of Connecticut state agencies and public/private organizations engaged in nurturing the sector. See more detailed info at [www.HartfordBusiness.com](http://www.HartfordBusiness.com):

**Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD)** — (860) 270-8000; [www.ct.gov/ecd/site/default.asp](http://www.ct.gov/ecd/site/default.asp).

**Connecticut United for Research Excellence (CURE)** — (203) 470-2720; [www.cureconnect.org](http://www.cureconnect.org).

**Program in Innovative Therapeutics for Connecticut’s Health (PITCH)** — [www.pitch.yale.edu](http://www.pitch.yale.edu).

**Connecticut Innovations Inc.** — (860) 563-5851; [www.ctinnovations.com](http://www.ctinnovations.com).

**SECT Technology Center** — (203) 868-9249; [Teg6854@gmail.com](mailto:Teg6854@gmail.com).

**Yale Entrepreneurial Institute** — (203) 436-8893; [www.yei.yale.edu](http://www.yei.yale.edu).

expenditures in the state.

Meantime, Jax already is planning for construction of a second administration-laboratory building adjacent to its current home on UConn Health’s campus in Farmington, Hyde said.

Finally, Jax’s highly-paid workers — many of whom are Millennials from the U.S. and abroad with advanced science and medical degrees — have bought houses or leased apartments in and around the campus, he said.

In addition to one day emerging from Jax’s shadows to become bioscience entrepreneurs themselves, Hyde said some Jax hires also brought with them highly educated spouses or significant others willing and able to contribute to Connecticut’s economy either as employees or business owners.

Jax’s mission to unlock the secrets of the human genome one day could open the door to more effective drugs and treatments for cancer, lung and cardiovascular ailments, among others, and hasten the arrival of “personalized medicine” in which treatments are prescribed based on a patient’s genetic profile.

Jax is also collaborating with UConn and UConn Health. In addition to joint hires, for example, Jax and UConn last August announced they were launching a \$7.7 million joint Single Cell Genomics Center in Farmington, enabling researchers from both organizations to isolate and study individual cells.

Meantime, across from UConn Health, at 400 Farmington Ave., is the site of the university’s bioscience startup incubator.

Rita Zangari, executive director of UConn’s technology incubation program, said the school is currently in talks with about 20 companies interested in partnering with UConn to commercialize research. At least one wants to team with UConn’s dental school to apply its technology to certain dental applications, Zangari said.

“The key thing we were looking for that companies not just be here,” she said, “but that there be collaborative research between the companies and the university.”

PITCH’s aims are similar. But with only a dozen research prospects still gestating in its portfolio, it will take time to see which ones germinate into marketable treatments and technologies, Crews and Wright say.

“I’m optimistic that 10 years from now,” Crews said, “there will be PITCH graduates whose ventures are growing and succeeding. It’s about paying it forward.” ■

## Could CT be the next big bioscience cluster?

There’s room enough on the East Coast for one or two more major bioscience clusters, and Connecticut easily could be it, says a planner for one of this state’s leading bioscience hubs.

Matthew Nemerson ran the Connecticut Technology Council before joining the city of New Haven in 2014 as Mayor Toni Harp’s economic-development director. Nemerson, too, was a co-founder of the Elm City’s Science Park development that is home to a number of bioscience startups

Beyond Fairfield County, Connecticut is fairly uncongested and affordable, Nemerson said. Its transportation network of I-95, Amtrak and the Metro-North and Shoreline North commuter rail lines make Connecticut accessible to and from Boston, southern New York/northern New Jersey, and Baltimore-Washington D.C., he adds.

“If you’re in New York, it’s easy to turn to Connecticut. If you’re in Cambridge [Mass.], it’s easy to turn to

Connecticut,” he said.

Moreover, those East Coast bioscience clusters outside Connecticut “are reaching a tipping point where they’re too expensive and too congested.”

But to enhance its bioscience appeal, Connecticut eventually must zero in on a particular region of the state to anchor its ecosystem.

“It’s always about creating geographic critical mass,” Nemerson said. “When you think about places that are successful, you rarely think about states. You think about cities.”

“We believe everything we do has to involve Storrs, Hartford, New Haven, Stamford and New London,” he said. “... But that’s a different model than what they have in Massachusetts and New York, where they put everything in one place. Connecticut has got to focus on geographic location.”

— Gregory Seay



New Haven economic development director Matthew Nemerson launched that city’s Science Park two decades ago.

## Largest women-owned businesses in Greater Hartford

(Ranked by number of local employees as of March 2016)

Rank	Company	Local employees/ Local offices	Total employees/ Total offices	Type of business	Women owner(s) and percent owned	Year founded
1	Merry Employment Group Inc. 433 S. Main St., Suite 216 West Hartford, CT 06110 860-561-1002; <a href="http://www.jobs-ct.com">www.jobs-ct.com</a>	1,200 2	2,000 4	Direct-hire, temporary staffing, payroll and human-resource consulting	Sally Merry 100%	1963
2	Charter Oak Building Maintenance Inc. 1840 Silas Deane Highway Rocky Hill, CT 06067 860-632-5667; <a href="http://www.cobm.net">www.cobm.net</a>	300 1	300 1	Facility maintenance and janitorial services	Kenia M. Thomas 51%	1988
3	Carla's Pasta Inc. 50 Talbot Lane South Windsor, CT 06074 860-436-4042; <a href="http://www.carlaspasta.com">www.carlaspasta.com</a>	155 1	175 1	Pasta and pesto manufacturer	Carla Squatrito 68%	1978
4	Nursing Services Inc. 21 High St. East Hartford, CT 06118 860-568-8881; <a href="http://www.nursingservicesinc.com">www.nursingservicesinc.com</a>	150 1	150 1	Licensed and certified home health care, companion/homemaking/chore services	Yvette Roming 45% Melissa Roming 45% Linda Tucker 5%	1980
5	Companions for Living LLC 1216 Farmington Ave., Suite 202 West Hartford, CT 06107 860-882-0802; <a href="http://www.companionsforliving.com">www.companionsforliving.com</a>	117 1	117 1	Home care	Julianne Roth 100%	2005
6	Euro-American Connections & Homecare 1436 Berlin Turnpike, Suite 1-A Berlin, CT 06037 860-829-0208; <a href="http://www.homecare4u.com">www.homecare4u.com</a>	105 1	105 1	Homecare agency and registry	Maggie Drag 100%	1989
7	iTech Solutions Inc. 30 Stamford Drive Farmington, CT 06032 860-674-1636; <a href="http://www.itechsolutions.com">www.itechsolutions.com</a>	96 1	163 1 (1)	Information technology staffing, consulting and recruiting services	Kay Lukas 100%	1995
8	Caring Solutions LLC 5104 Bigelow Commons Enfield, CT 06082 860-745-4026; <a href="http://www.CTcaringsolutions.com">www.CTcaringsolutions.com</a>	80 1	80 1	Home health care	Sandra Sergeant 100%	2000
9	Phoenix Manufacturing Inc. 176 South Road Enfield, CT 06082 860-745-2080; <a href="http://www.phoenix-mfg-inc.com">www.phoenix-mfg-inc.com</a>	60 1	60 1	Precision-machined aerospace components	Krystyna Paluch 100%	1989
9	The Walker Group 20 Waterside Drive Farmington, CT 06032 860-678-3530; <a href="http://www.TheWalkerGroup.com">www.TheWalkerGroup.com</a>	60 1	60 1	Managed IT services, IT security, virtualization, wireless technologies, technical advisory services, cloud hosting, backup and disaster recovery, web design, staffing	Katherine H. Emery 100%	1986
11	Andrew Associates Inc. 6 Pearson Way Enfield, CT 06082 860-253-0000; <a href="http://www.andrewdm.com">www.andrewdm.com</a>	56 1	56 1	Solution-based marketing, advertising and direct marketing serving for-profit and nonprofit clients nationwide	Judith Knapp 65%	1985
12	Adams & Knight Inc. 80 Avon Meadow Lane Avon, CT 06001 860-676-2300; <a href="http://www.adamsknight.com">www.adamsknight.com</a>	55 1	55 1	Integrated marketing agency; strategic planning, advertising, branding, PR, social media, digital marketing for health care, financial services, consumer and leisure industries	Jill Adams 51%	1988
13	Acturus Inc. (2) 270 Farmington Ave., Suite 200 Farmington, CT 06032 860-242-2005; <a href="http://www.acturus.com">www.acturus.com</a>	54 1	78 5	Market research consultancy	Dale Lersch 40% Gigi Ryan-Philion 20%	1978
14	Al's Beverage Co. 1-3 Revay Road East Windsor, CT 06088 860-627-7003; <a href="http://www.alsbeverage.com">www.alsbeverage.com</a>	50 1	57 2	Manufacturer and distributor of fountain soft drinks	Marjorie Feldman Wood 58% Additional woman owner(s) 12%	1996
15	InfoShred 3 Craftsman Road East Windsor, CT 06088 860-627-5800; <a href="http://www.infoshred.com">www.infoshred.com</a>	40 1	40 1	Confidential document destruction and records storage	Stacey J. DiPiazza 100%	1997
16	Beacon Light and Supply Co. 180 Walnut St., P.O. Box 1934 Hartford, CT 06120 860-527-8236; <a href="http://www.beaconlightsupply.com">www.beaconlightsupply.com</a>	36 2	36 2	Full-line electrical distributor with Internet sales	Merle J. Trager 52% Remy J. Schwartz 16%	1932
17	John Michael Associates Inc. 94 Holmes Road Newington, CT 06111 860-666-1414; <a href="http://www.jmalogos.com">www.jmalogos.com</a>	35 1	35 1	Promotional-merchandise marketing, branded merchandise, online-fulfillment programs, award/recognition programs, event/trade show marketing, kitting, importing, corporate branding	Sara K. Papa 51%	1980
17	Technical Industries Inc. 336 Pinewoods Road Torrington, CT 06790 860-489-2160; <a href="http://www.technicalindustriesinc.com">www.technicalindustriesinc.com</a>	35 1	49 2	Extrusion, injection and blow molding	Susan O. Parent 51%	1994
19	ACT Group 20 Commerce Drive Cromwell, CT 06416 800-548-9929; <a href="http://www.goactgroup.com">www.goactgroup.com</a>	33 1	33 1	Office equipment, 3D equipment and services, document management services, and managed-print services	Cindi Gondek 51%	1974

Source: Individual companies.

Note: The state defines a woman-owned business as one that is at least 51 percent owned by one or more women. In the case of a publicly-owned business, at least 51 percent of the stock is owned by one or more women and the management and daily operations are controlled by one or more women.

(1) Sixty-seven employees work remotely.

(2) Formerly The Pert Group. Merged with Arizona market research firm MSS on July 1, 2015.

Compiled by Heide Martin.

To view the full list, please visit [HartfordBusiness.com](http://HartfordBusiness.com)



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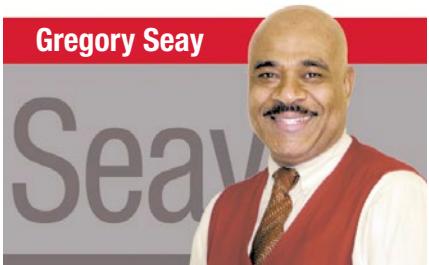
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# Doctor's Express opening in N. Britain this summer

Gregory Seay



Trevor Davis Commercial Real Estate LLC was sole broker.

## Haddam dentist's relo

Haddam dentist Keith Campbell recently paid \$200,000 for a pair of corner-office condominiums in the town's Higganum section, brokers say.

Campbell purchased the combined 2,128-square-foot condo units 1 and 2 at 415 Killingworth Road from seller KDLSC LLC.

Campbell intends to relocate his practice from 212 Saybrook Road, according to sole broker Trevor Davis Commercial Real Estate LLC.

## Francesca's in S. Windsor

Women's apparel-fragrances retailer Francesca's has opened a 1,420-square-foot boutique in South Windsor's The Promenade Shops at Evergreen Walk.

Founded in 1999, Francesca's claims more than 600 stores and outlets in the U.S.

## Middletown leases

Trevor Davis Commercial Real Estate LLC lists a series of Middletown office and retail lease signings and renewals. Davis is sole broker, except where noted.

At Middletown Business Park, Connecticut Water Service leased 8,155 square feet; MRI Novelties signed for 2,000 square feet; and System Specialties leased 1,917 square feet.

O,R&L Commercial represented the tenant; Trevor Davis represented the landlord, BostonMiddletown, LLC. The latest leases raise the park's occupancy to 87 percent, Trevor Davis said.

At Great River Center, 362 Industrial Park Road, US Pack Logistics leased 4,400 square feet of a commercial condominium. Gaetan and Susan LaChance are the landlords.

## Newington flex space

A Newington flex warehouse has 14,600 square feet for lease.

The facility at 50 Rockwell Road has 22-foot clear ceilings and a pair of docks.

Reno Properties Group LLC is listing broker.



Typical interior for a Doctor's Express clinic slated to open this summer in New Britain.

**A**merican Family Clinics/Doctors Express Urgent Care says it will open its fifth Connecticut Doctor's Express clinic in New Britain around July in the former Taco Bell fast-food space on East Main Street.

Landlord Jasco Development is overseeing conversion of the approximately 3,200-square-foot space at 135 East Main St., across the street from the New Brite Plaza Shopping Center, according to Kaushik Makati, Birmingham, Ala.-based AFC/Doctors Express' director of community and corporate engagement.

Doctors Express will offer on-site X-rays and lab work, patient rooms and parking, Makati said. About 25 will work in the New Britain clinic in the first year.

Eventually, AFC/Doctors Express plans another 10 to 15 more clinics across Connecticut.

## Perk opening in Middletown

The Perk on Main restaurant chain has purchased a retail/restaurant building on Main Street in Middletown for its newest eatery specializing in crepes.

Perk on Main LLC paid \$203,000 for the 2,466-square-foot edifice at 344 Main from Bun on the Run LLC.

Perk has two other restaurants in Durham and Guilford.

*Gregory Seay is the Hartford Business Journal News Editor.*

PHOTO: AMERICAN FAMILY CLINICS/DOCTORS EXPRESS URGENT CARE

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## EDITORIAL

## Economic argument for legalizing weed not valid

If you put a pot of gold in front of state lawmakers these days they'll do just about anything to get their hands on it.

Whether it's taxing Yale's endowment or penalizing large employers that pay workers below \$15 an hour, lawmakers seem willing to float any idea that would raise revenues for a cash-strapped state.

Some legislators are pushing for the legalization of recreational marijuana, using an economic argument to make Connecticut potentially the first New England state to allow residents of a certain age to get high without legal consequences.

We think the argument is wrong-minded. To push for the legalization of an illegal drug simply because it will help the state raise new revenues is not sound economic, social or public health policy. It simply whiffs of desperation.

To be clear, there appears to be little support for legalizing weed this legislative session. A legalization bill proposed in February has gone nowhere. But as the state grapples with growing deficits in the years ahead, marijuana proponents will harp on the notion that legalization could raise substantial sums of money — perhaps as much as \$50 million annually, according to one estimate.

Last week, pot proponents held an informational session to explore possibilities of legalization, even bringing in a state lawmaker from Colorado who crafted that state's first-in-the-nation recreational marijuana law. The main argument used was a fiscal one: If Connecticut doesn't act quickly, other New England states will legalize the drug first, preventing the Nutmeg State from maximizing the return on its legalization investment.

Of greater importance than a fiscal argument, however, are the social and health effects legalizing weed would have on the populace, and whether or not we want to promote activities that foster laziness and other potential harmful effects.

Legalizing weed as a way to reform the criminal justice system, for example, is a better argument worth having, but even that notion is flawed. Gov. Dannel P. Malloy, for example, said he opposes legalizing recreational pot even though he has made significant strides to decriminalize small amounts of the drug's use through his second-chance society initiative. While he doesn't necessarily want marijuana use to stain an individual's criminal record — damaging the employability of low-level offenders, particularly minorities — encouraging the drug's use, he recently said publicly, is not a road he wants to travel down.

We aren't trying to be the social police. The political tea leaves may indicate that marijuana legalization will gain steam in the years ahead. So far, four states and the District of Columbia have already OK'd recreational use of the drug. But Connecticut shouldn't legalize marijuana simply because it offers a quick option to fill budget holes created by irresponsible stewardship of our state finances.

We don't need to double down on stupid. ■

**To push for the legalization of an illegal drug simply because it will help the state raise new revenues is not sound economic, social or public health policy. It simply whiffs of desperation.**

### HARTFORDBUSINESS.COM POLL

Should CT legalize recreational marijuana use?

Yes

No

To vote, go online to [HartfordBusiness.com](http://HartfordBusiness.com).

#### Last week's poll results:

Will bioscience be the CT economic engine most hope it will be?

40% Yes

35% No

25% Too early to tell

## EXPERTS CORNER

## Treating tax time as an opportunity

By Andrew S. Lattimer and Thomas Krywinski

With just a short time to go before Tax Day on April 18th, many people now find themselves laser-focused on preparing their income tax returns for themselves, their families or their organization. It can obviously be a deeply involved process, filled with nuances, possibilities and challenges filers have perhaps not yet thought about. Research and attention to detail should be a priority.

Why should people be so strategic and involved, particularly on something that happens once a year and so often seems so routine? That's exactly the reason they should — because Tax Day only comes once a year, to make sure your filing is done in a way that makes it most beneficial to you.

Treating tax filing as a priority could mean a better return for a business owner in terms of potential savings and deductions.

Tax filing season is an opportunity and should be treated as such. With that in mind, here are some tips that can allow filers to do just that, tips that are never too late to put into practical applications.

**Organization is essential** — This may seem quite obvious, but a good tax filing starts with proper organization. Make sure you have all your necessary paperwork in a row, whether you are preparing a tax return yourself or having it prepared professionally.

Make sure all pertinent receipts are accounted for, particularly receipts for charitable contributions.

**Be certain that non-cash contributions are considered** — Proper documentation will give filers peace of mind in knowing that every box has been checked, and could save you some difficulty down the line.

**Be mindful of all potential deductions** — Here is the part where you can really start saving some money — there are numerous deductions made available every year to

filers that were created to provide relief; the problem is many simply do not know about them. That's why you need to ask the right questions and do the right research.

Ask yourself each of these questions, and possibly others, when it comes time to thinking about potential deductions:

- Did you install any energy-efficient equipment (i.e. water heater, windows etc.)? If so, there are ample tax deductions available that could bring impressive savings.

• Have you considered education expenses and accounted for them? Tuition, college savings accounts, student loans — there is vast potential for savings here. Consideration should also be given for dependent education expenses and who should claim them.

• Did you capture all your real estate and personal property taxes paid?

• Do you have any foreign investments?

**Managing your refund** — For those fortunate enough to receive a refund — or perhaps more to the point, for those whose careful organization and consideration of all

potential deductions has led them to a refund — this becomes a cash infusion that needs to be managed as well.

For starters, it is good advice to always use direct deposit rather than asking for a paper check. It's a modern convenience, but it's also a more secure way of receiving money, and direct deposit will enable your refund to arrive faster.

And once the money is in your account, there is still more planning that can be done. Should it be invested? Should it be put back into a business?

Remember the importance of Tax Day on April 18th. Every filing brings opportunities. ■

Andrew S. Lattimer, CPA, and Thomas Krywinski, CPA, are partners with West Hartford-based accounting-consulting firm BlumShapiro.



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Join Connecticut's Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP), along with the *Hartford Business Journal* and the *Connecticut Green Guide*, this May for the **Green Circle Sustainability Awards**. The awards event will recognize this year's Green Circle Awards honorees, and be a celebration of sustainability, recognizing companies throughout Connecticut for their contributions and achievements.

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All Waste, Inc.	Connecticut Farm Energy Program - CT Resource Conservation & Development Area, Inc.	Eco-Smart, Inc.	King Low Heywood Thomas	Pitney Bowes	Town of Manchester Sewer Department
BD Medical Systems	Connecticut Green LEAF Schools	ESPN Inc.	Leticia Colon de Mejias and the Green Eco Warriors	Pratt & Whitney	Town of Old Saybrook
BJ's Wholesale Club	Connecticut Technical High School System (CTHSS)	Ginger Chapman/Yale Office of Sustainability	Materials Innovation and Recycling Authority (MIRA)	Saybrook Point Inn & Marina, LLC	United Technologies Corporation
Boehringer Ingelheim Pharmaceuticals, Inc.	Coventry Energy Conservation Alternative Energy Advisory Committee	Goodwin College	Meriden Enterprise Center c/o 290 Pratt Street, LLC	Southern Connecticut State University	University of Connecticut
Brewer Pilots Point Marina	CT Department of Correction	Greenwich Academy	Middletown Area Transit Bus Maintenance and Storage Facility	Stamford 2030 District	University of Connecticut/Department of Natural Resources and the Environment
Brookfield YMCA Comprehensive Energy Efficiency and Resilience Upgrades	CTfastrak, Connecticut's First Bus Rapid Transit System	Hartford Marathon Foundation	New Haven Board of Education (NHBOE)/AFB Management	Sub Edge Farm	USA Hauling & Recycling
CED Greentech East	DaCruz Manufacturing, Inc (formerly C&M Screw Machine Products, Inc.)	Joel M Rinebold, Director of Energy Initiative at Connecticut Center for Advanced Technology, Inc (CCAT)	O&G Industries, Inc.	The City of Hartford Planning & Zoning Commission; Sara Bronin, Chair	Valley Container, Inc
Chapman Manufacturing Company	Domingo Medina	Joyce D. and Andrew J. Mandell Greater Hartford Jewish Community Center, Inc.	Oak Grove Montessori School	The Hartford	Wilton Go Green, Inc.
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# HARTFORD BUSINESS JOURNAL



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Steve Laschever

## WOMEN + IN BUSINESS

### 8 Remarkable Women 2016

#### Women leaders share 'keys' to success

Every successful leader has keys that drive their success. Whether it's hiring the right people, building strong business and personal relationships, or constantly learning from others, individuals who understand and leverage key areas that make them successful are always a step ahead of the competition.

As part of our 14th annual Women in Business awards, we've chosen a "keys" theme. In the pages that follow we recognize eight remarkable women who are making a difference within their organization and the community. We also highlight their keys to success, both in their work and in life.

This year's winners come from all walks of life, and many of them have climbed the proverbial corporate ladder to earn positions of power and leadership.

We've got several executives in marketing and advertising and another winner who leads Connecticut's largest health insurer.

Our winners also include a principal in one of the state's largest architecture/planning firms and an operations chief of a major investment advisory firm.

As you read about Hartford Business Journal's eight remarkable women honorees, you will discover that each of them was helped along the way by a mentor who installed

both personal and professional advice and perspective. Our women leaders also work hard to enrich the careers and lives of their employees.

In each of the past 14 years, Hartford Business Journal has honored eight of the region's most talented women in

leadership roles throughout Central Connecticut. The winners are nominated by readers and chosen by a panel of independent judges (read more about the judges on Page 30). The honorees demonstrate a business savvy, confidence in themselves and their organizations, and a strong track record of success in the business world.

We hope you enjoy this issue and attend the celebration to be held from 11 a.m. – 1:45 p.m. on Thursday, May 12, at the Connecticut Convention Center in Hartford. The event will include a special panel discussion on "keys to success" moderated by Jill Adams, president and CEO of Adams & Knight. Panelists will include Joanne Berger-Sweeney, president, Trinity College; Rhona Free, president, University of St. Joseph; Manon Cox, president and CEO, Protein Sciences; and Susan Tully, president and general manager, NBC Connecticut.

– Greg Bordonaro  
Editor

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# Mary Jo Olenick

Principal  
S/L/A/M Collaborative

## Design is conceptual-thinker Olenick's passion

**Karen Sackowitz**

Special to the Hartford Business Journal

If you have ever walked the campuses at universities such as Notre Dame, Duke, Western Michigan or Providence College, chances are you've seen buildings planned and designed by The S/L/A/M Collaborative, an architecture/planning firm that handles building projects from design through construction. The woman behind these projects — and so many more — is Mary Jo Olenick.

Specializing in higher-education projects, Olenick says the focus on colleges and universities appeals to her natural curiosity.

"In higher ed, you get to learn beyond the designing of the buildings, to what those buildings will allow the institution to do," she says. "You get to talk to the people who will actually learn, work and teach in those buildings."

Olenick is known among her peers as an acknowledged industry leader who has been instrumental in the development of S/L/A/M's signature programming and planning methodology. A conceptual thinker, she works closely with key administrators and users to understand each project's unique needs, aligning space with institutional vision, and collaborating with the entire team to formulate the best possible design solution.

"In programming, I need to figure out how buildings need to perform. The number of rooms, functionality, other factors," she says. "So I spend a lot of time with the end users, which makes my perspective a little different from the others."

"Mary Jo's professionalism and talent have helped secure S/L/A/M's position as a leader in higher-education design," says Bob Pulito, the firm's president. "She is a highly visible senior leader and is one of the most respected programming experts and planners in the country."

In 1976, when Olenick first began her architecture training at Penn State, fewer than 3 percent of American architects were female. Today, according to the American Institute of Architects, that number is more than 20 percent. Olenick says the influx of women has changed the industry in positive ways.

"As a practice, when there were fewer women, it was less diverse. Men and women think in different ways, so when the kinds of people aren't diverse, the thinking is not as broad," she says. "Also, women have advanced in all fields; there are more presidents of universities who are women, and more women in facilities departments. So the clients are more diverse too."

Pulito agrees.

"In the old days, the personality of architects was fairly monolithic, partly because the field was dominated by men," he says. "Mary Jo has been fearless and determined in her desire to be a leader and to have an impact not only on S/L/A/M, but on our profession."

To that end, Olenick mentors women and other young professionals, which she says benefits her as well.

"It's so rewarding. The people I mentor know more than I did at their age; they have technology and tools we didn't have," she says. "At the same time, they need to understand the whole process from design to an actual building. I know more of that from years of experience, that's just the nature of it. So the relationship is mutually gratifying."

The philosophies Olenick shares with the women she mentors are those which have been instrumental in forging her own path.

"Be genuine and authentic, because that's how you add value. Participate, and behave like you have an impact," she says. "Figure out how to do things, rather than why you shouldn't."

Pulito says his colleague walks the talk when it comes to how she mentors her younger staff members.

"Mary Jo is authentic, which reinforces the idea that



**“Be genuine and authentic, because that's how you add value.”**

### What are your keys to ...

#### Maintaining business success:

A key factor for success is continual growth. To compete on a high level, we need to not only stay ahead of industry trends but find ways to invent new ones. Architecture is a talent business where creativity is critical, which I am passionate about because I think it is the trait that defines us as human beings.

#### Maintaining work-life balance:

I maintain a work-life balance by working at the office (or on the road) and goofing off at home. I think it's easy for me because I love my work and I love goofing off. It's almost like having a split personality.

#### Keeping a competitive edge:

My philosophy about keeping a competitive edge is to keep moving. The design industry thrives on innovation — the best ideas usually win. Over the years, I have found that letting go of my very best ideas has forced me to invent new and better ones.

#### Who was an influential mentor in your professional life?

Dave Labau, the "L" in S/L/A/M, was a great mentor to me. He was so different than I was; a truly gracious gentleman with an amazing ability to make anyone feel good about themselves even for me back when I was a clumsy intern with no time for social graces.

# A successful *Woman in Business* is very rarely just a woman in *business*.

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# Maureen Cooper

Chief Operating Officer  
Fiduciary Investment Advisors

## Cooper serves as Fiduciary Investment Advisors' 'backbone'

By David Medina

Special to the Hartford Business Journal

**B**y any measure, Fiduciary Investment Advisors LLC of Windsor is one of the fastest-growing money management firms in Greater Hartford.

The company began in 2006 at a Starbucks with no office space, no clients and no assets. Today, FIA represents more than 300 clients with \$44 billion in assets and 60 employees.

Many say FIA's rapid success stems from an environment of warm, relaxed professionalism that has been carefully crafted by Maureen Cooper, chief operating officer. It's a culture where team harmony is valued more than individual achievement. It was Cooper who built the FIA infrastructure, incorporated the company, registered it with the SEC, negotiated leases for office space, set policies and procedures and hired every employee that has ever worked there. She also oversees the company finances and manages the staff. To say Cooper is the backbone of FIA would be an understatement.

Upon meeting her, she is genuinely friendly, self-effacing and very comfortable in her own skin, which probably explains why FIA was named one of the Best Places to Work in Connecticut by the Hartford Business Journal for six consecutive years, and one of the Best Places to Work in the nation by Pension and Investments Magazine.

"I think the key to my success is having people be comfortable with me when they come in," she says. "We spend a lot of time together, so we have to respect and trust each other. Some of the smartest people in the world are not people you would want to spend your day with. Some egos are too big to be part of our system."

Not surprisingly, Cooper faced many challenges on her way to the top of a male-dominated field, beginning with her first entry-level job at a brokerage firm in her hometown of Stamford.

"I started right out of college," she says, remembering that she was dating her husband, Johann, at the time. "A few months later, I asked my manager if I could take my Series 7 exam to become a registered broker and he said 'women don't do that; they have babies and they stay home.' So I challenged him and took the exam; and as soon as I passed, I left the firm. If I knew then what I know now, I probably would have had good grounds for a lawsuit."

From there, Cooper went to the former Kidder, Peabody and Co. and remained there for 22 years as it transitioned into Paine Webber and Co. and finally into UBS Financial Services. Her supervisor for much of that time was retired investment advisor Joseph Mitchell, who remembers nicknaming her "Mosi" after the late Mosi Tatupu, an iconic and beloved special teams player for the New England Patriots.

"One time, I had a heart attack and was in the hospital for a month or two," Mitchell recalled. "While I was gone, my clients did twice as much business with Mosi than they ever did with me because they loved her so much."

Before he retired, Mitchell says, he encouraged Cooper to work alongside Mark Wetzel, who joined Kidder after graduate school, and Michael Goss, another Kidder investment advisor. Together, they formed the three-person team that launched FIA. Wetzel is FIA's president and Goss is its executive vice president.

Along the way, Cooper found time to face another major challenge: balancing her work life with raising two daughters, Alison, 25, and Amelia, 16, and a son, Andrew, 23.

"A lot of the responsibility for raising a family falls on women, like being there when the kids are sick," she says. "I



*"I think the key to my success is having people be comfortable with me when they come in."*

had my mom help me out, but not everybody has a support system. ... I try to be sympathetic to that with our working mothers. If there's a Halloween parade in nursery school and they want to go, I think they should go."

Cooper, who lives in Portland, says the work-life balancing act can be a benefit in the corporate world. "Women feel things differently. They think more about the human aspect of the work," she said. As an example, she cites the numerous community-service initiatives that form an integral part of the FIA work model she established, everything from raising funds for nonprofit organizations to physical activities, such as finding apartments for the homeless, monthly food drop-offs at a local pantry and collecting used prom dresses for girls graduating from inner city schools.

"When I interview potential employees, it's what they hang on to the most," she says. ■

### What are your keys to ...

#### Maintaining business success:

You must surround yourself with the right people. I joined Mark Wetzel on the same day as Mike Goss, and the three of us became a team that day. Twenty years later, I am proud of the 60-person team that we call FIA. My experience has taught me to hire those people whom I like to be around. When a team works well together, that benefits the client and leads to greater success for the firm.

#### Maintaining work-life balance:

They say "takes a village" and that has been my experience in raising my three children. We live in a small town and I have managed to form a network of wonderful mothers and fathers to support me. Countless carpools were arranged for rides to nursery school and after-school activities, all the way through high school sports. When my children were small, my parents were always there for us. All working parents should be blessed with friends and neighbors and flexibility to achieve this balance.

#### Keeping a competitive edge:

At FIA, we are never satisfied with the status quo. We always make sure that we are staying ahead of the curve. Networking plays an important role in keeping a competitive edge. We stay connected with our committees, the professionals who work with our clients, our vendors and our managers.

# Remarkable.

## Congratulations Kathy Boucher

for being recognized as one of eight remarkable women in business by the *Hartford Business Journal*.

For the Decker team and our clients who work with her every day, the honor is great news, but hardly surprising.

**Way to go, Kathy!**



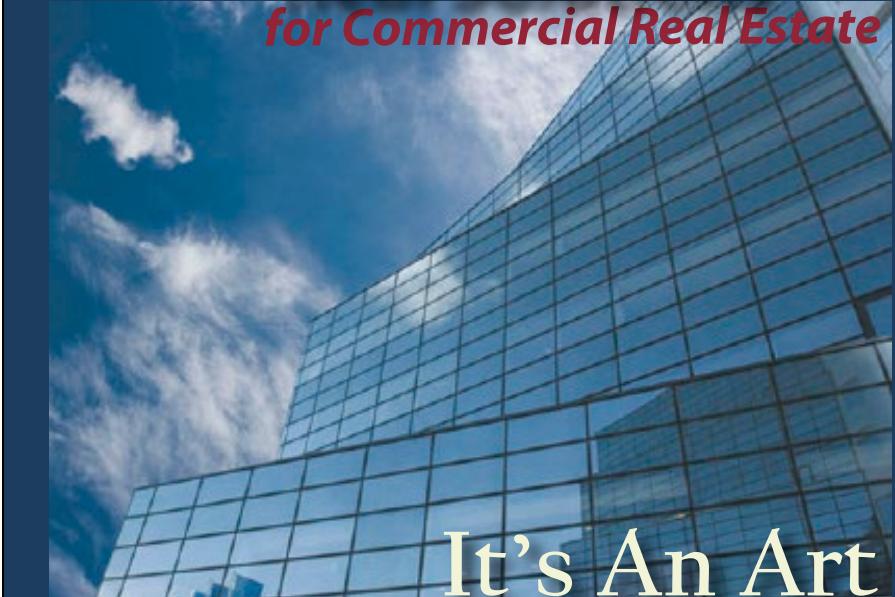
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# Tara Knapp

Vice President of Development,  
PR and Marketing  
Gaylord Specialty Healthcare

## Rainmaker Knapp helps fund life-changing services

By Karen Sackowitz

Special to the Hartford Business Journal

**T**ara Knapp is the vice president of development, PR and marketing at Gaylord Specialty Healthcare, a long-term care hospital specializing in the treatment of patients with complex medical and intensive rehabilitative issues.

Knapp joined Gaylord as the director of development in 2003. Since then, she has risen to vice president, eventually incorporating dual roles to oversee both development and public relations in 2012. Her record of success is no small feat given the lofty goals held by the hospital.

One of the first major projects Knapp handled was a multi-million dollar capital campaign to expand the hospital's footprint and medical capabilities. Knapp put a team in place and managed to exceed the original fundraising goal of \$4 million, bringing in a total of \$6 million. As a result, the Milne Pavilion opened in 2008, a modern, technology-enhanced wing to care for some of the sickest patients.

In 2014, Knapp developed a team to create the first annual Gaylord Gauntlet 5K obstacle run to benefit the Gaylord Sports Association for disabled athletes. Between the event's first and second years, participation increased from 400 to 600 runners and the net income nearly tripled. In January of this year, another of Knapp's projects culminated in the opening of the only Adolescent Spinal Cord Injury Rehabilitation Unit in the state, complete with kid-friendly rooms with adjoining family suites.

Perhaps closest to Knapp's heart is her team's fundraising efforts that enabled the hospital to purchase an Ekso wearable bionic suit. The \$160,000 cutting-edge equipment allows individuals with lower-body weakness or paralysis to stand up and walk during therapy. Knapp set the wheels in motion by entering Gaylord in a social-media contest in which a New Haven law firm was giving \$100,000 to a nonprofit organization. They won.

"It was like a rally when we won that contest," she says. "When we won, when we got it, when it arrived, every moment was electric."

Knapp says the Ekso suit has made a tangible impact for not only patients, but the staff as a whole.

"At Gaylord, we see lots of spinal-cord injuries and stroke patients; they all say the same thing, 'I just want to be able to walk again.' They want to stand up and walk for sociopsychological reasons, or just to walk their daughter down the aisle," she says. "It's not just a tool. It gives hope and possibility."

Gaylord Specialty Healthcare's Kim Thompson, who handles marketing and public relations, agrees that achievements like the Ekso suit campaign really hit home for everyone.

"Seeing patients who were immobilized be able to stand up, to look you eye to eye, it gives me chills," she says. "It's really powerful."

How is it that the efforts of one person can so strongly motivate everyone around her and effect significant change at every turn?

"Tara has a big personality, she is capable, and she brings a light-hearted attitude," says Thompson. "She is brought into some meetings you wouldn't expect her to be in, but she is there because of her ability to see the big picture, details large and small."

Thompson says Knapp's proactive managing style is something her coworkers try to emulate as well.

"If Tara doesn't know about something, she'll educate herself. She will come into a meeting with facts and figures and we'll say 'How did you know that?' and she'll say she read up



*“I have an internal engine that knows what's right, and I care that we do good work.”*

on it the night before so that we could get things done faster."

Knapp says her motivation comes from both her work and her environment.

"First off, things need to get done. I have an internal engine that knows what's right, and I care that we do good work," she says. "The other side of it is that at Gaylord everyone goes above and beyond – our doctors, therapists, everyone. They will do everything to help a patient recover. I'm in a very enabling environment to be the best I can."

Knapp's coworkers know that her status as a VP doesn't keep her from working extra hours at night or on weekends if that's what it takes. For Knapp, it isn't even a factor.

"I am so grateful to be able to drive into work on a Saturday. Some of our patients can't do that; I don't take that for granted," she says. "Any one of us could have that accident, that aneurism; to have the ability and the life I have is a gift."

### What are your keys to ...

#### Maintaining business success:

At Gaylord Specialty Healthcare we encourage patients to "Think Possible." It's a mantra I take to heart when opportunities fall in my lap — and fall outside of my comfort zone. The key is to say 'yes' and never turn your back on opportunity when it comes around.

#### Maintaining work-life balance:

Life's too short not to have fun. If all you do is go to work, come home and walk the dog, that's not a balance. I keep it in check by filling the other side of the scale with an equal amount of activities. The busier I get at work, the more involved I try to become on the outside so that the work doesn't seem so enormous.

#### Keeping a competitive edge:

Change is inevitable and those who embrace it, and are willing to accept some level of uncertainty, have the chance to come out ahead.

#### Who was an influential mentor in your professional life?

Both my mother and I were products of women's education so the message I heard both at school and at home from my parents was that I could achieve anything that I wanted. If you grow up in an environment where there are no limitations, then your only limits are what you set for yourself.

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# Amanda Mueller

Senior Vice President  
Cashman + Katz Integrated  
Communications

## Mueller brings Cashman + Katz clients, positivity

By Karen Sackowitz

Special to the Hartford Business Journal

**T**hirteen years ago, Amanda Mueller came to Cashman + Katz, a relatively small shop, from a larger agency in Boston. Immediately adapting to the change in culture, she began making an impact in every way possible.

In less than 10 years, Mueller reached senior vice president level, heading up the firm's public relations and social media practice. She has since tripled revenue from those services, which now account for 40 percent of the agency's total revenue, up from 20 percent just four years ago.

Mueller's efforts drew attention from New York City and Boston when she led Cashman + Katz to one of its largest-ever client wins, securing BIC North America. No small task, the acquisition of such a high-profile client pushed the small agency deservedly onto the national stage. She has since guided BIC through several community-relations initiatives, publicity campaigns and crisis-management situations, all while maintaining brand loyalty.

In addition to high-profile clients, Mueller also manages public relations activities for several nonprofits and community-service organizations, such as the School Nutrition Association of Connecticut, Goodwill Industries and Lea's Foundation for Leukemia Research in Hartford.

Being able to balance a diverse set of clients with the ever-demanding pace of a growing agency is something Mueller seems to orchestrate flawlessly. Her secret? Knowing her industry's strengths.

"PR has changed and become more complex, but the fundamentals are still the same. It's about relations — with clients, coworkers, the media. Building relationships with all of them," she says. "We're all going a million miles an hour, but you have to step back and make sure everyone's needs are being met. It's amazing work, but if the relationships aren't there, you won't grow the business."

Eric Cavoli, senior vice president and group creative director at Cashman + Katz, says forging those relationships is one of Mueller's greatest strengths.

"She is a great PR practitioner. It's a very difficult industry; it's not nine to five, there isn't a lot of structure," he says. "Her clients know they can call her any time and she'll always respond."

Mueller's high-speed multitasking doesn't stop when she leaves the office. At home, she is a mother to two young daughters who she says are as excited about her work as she is.

"My older daughter especially knows my clients by name, the companies I work with, the names of my coworkers. She is learning that it's important to love and to be passionate about what you do," she says. "That's what I want them to take away."

Mueller believes in not drawing too many lines around the elements of her life.

"People talk about work-life balance, but to me, it's all your life. Everything you do affects everything else," she says. "I have those relationships with my clients — they ask about my kids, my kids ask about them."

Cavoli says it's not uncommon to find Mueller at a client meeting in New York City during the day and at a school chorus concert in the evening.

"What she does isn't something that millions of working moms do all the time, but she has mastered it. She's gotten it down to a really great process," he says. "And, she juggles it all with a positive outlook. Her attitude and personality are outstanding."

Mueller is quick to credit those around her as being instrumental in her achievements at home and at work.



**“A lot is possible due to my coworkers; we work together to achieve success.”**

"A lot is possible due to my coworkers; we work together to achieve success," she says. "My husband is also a key piece; we have a strong partnership to keep things running at home."

These past two years, Mueller had the added challenge of her father's cancer diagnosis, which led to her managing his care and treatment regimen as well as liaising with his care team.

Thankfully they weathered the storm, and Mueller says the experience has stayed with her.

"Through these experiences I'm always learning and evolving," she says. "My dad's illness grounded me. You can have success, but you still need to have your health."

Cavoli added, "Ours is a tough business with deadlines and plenty of up and down days. Add to that working another full responsibility at home. To do all of that and still be cheerful, and a positive force in the office?" he says. "To me [Mueller is] simply remarkable." ■

### What are your keys to ...

#### Maintaining business success:

I truly believe that building positive relationships is vital for career success. My clients, my co-workers — everyone that I do business with on some level, I make it a priority to build and maintain a strong relationship with each and every one of them.

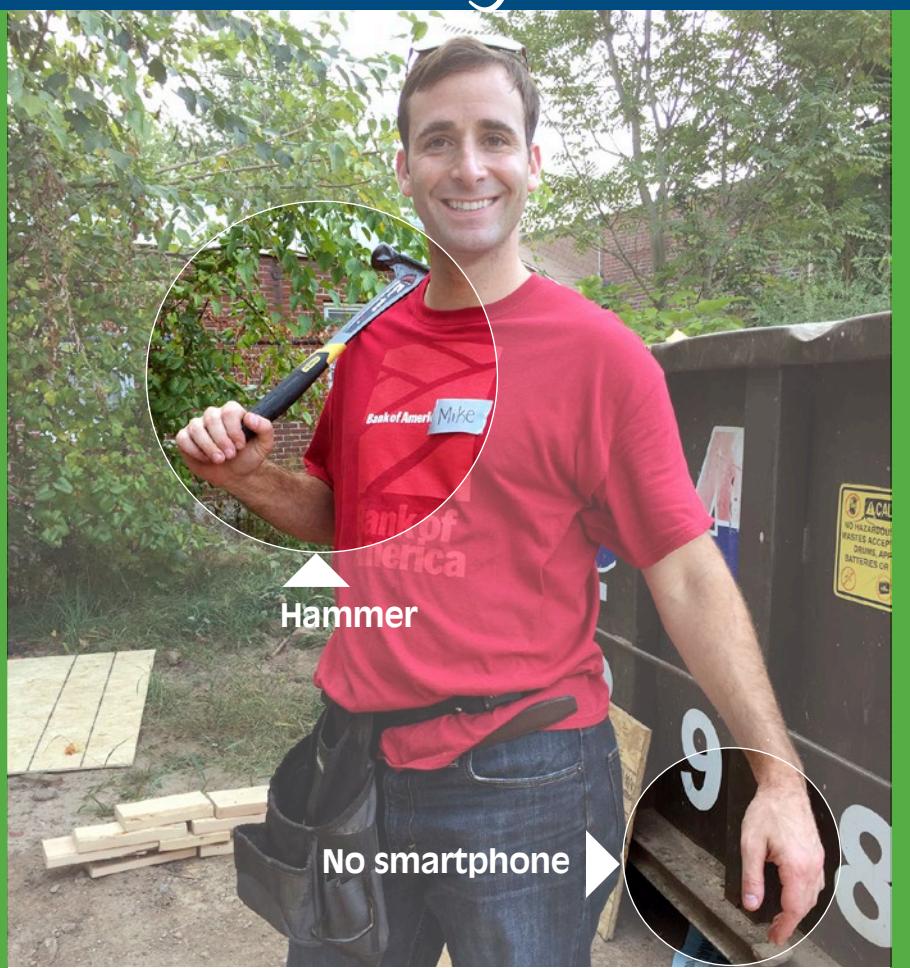
#### Maintaining work-life balance:

For me, the notion of work-life balance is somewhat flawed. It implies that the two exist separately, and from my perspective, I prefer to think of things as integrated. I bring my whole self to everything I do — whether I'm presenting at a meeting, or talking to my daughter's class. I make sure that every piece of my life is integrated — my clients not only know what my daughter's favorite TV show is — and my 10 year old will often ask me at dinner how my meeting went, or how a campaign was doing.

#### Keeping a competitive edge:

In my world, things are moving at such a fast pace. Public relations, social media, communications — it is constantly changing. So to that end, I try to remain humble and ask a lot of questions. I am comfortable knowing that I don't always have an answer for everything, and know that I must constantly evolve in order to become a better practitioner.

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# Build Together



## Pratt & Whitney Salutes This Year's 2016 Women in Business Award Winners.

From the company powering the transformation of aviation – a generation ahead – we congratulate all of this year's award recipients. Not only is your leadership inspiring this generation of trail blazers, but your efforts have cleared a new generation for takeoff into a new era of flight. This year, we're especially proud to recognize our own award winner, Tizz Weber, Pratt & Whitney's Director of Communications, who is celebrating 30 years of extraordinary service and leadership with UTC companies.



A generation ahead™



# Kathy Boucher

President and CEO  
Decker Creative Marketing

## Boucher maximizes productivity in work, life

By Karen Sackowitz  
Special to the Hartford Business Journal

It isn't often you meet a marketing agency president whose career started in the accounting department. But that was the career path for Kathy Boucher. After 30 years at Decker Creative Marketing, her drive to learn all aspects of her business and generate quality work has energized her and shows no signs of stopping.

"Kathy is a strong woman but has no edge to her," says her longtime friend and business partner Irene Makiaris of Makiaris Media Services. "She is always focused and doesn't get rattled. She sees a problem and finds a solution."

That tough but steady presence has served Decker well on both the client side and internally, as Boucher is seen as a strong mentor.

"She truly is a role model. She will bring someone on board at a mid-range level and really work with them to make sure they understand the philosophy of the company, and to make sure they set professional goals. She wants them to blossom, and see the strengths they have in their job," says Makiaris. "She also doesn't micromanage, preferring instead to let her staffers exercise their opinions to see what works. If it does, great. If it doesn't, she will encourage them to look for another solution."

In addition to helping grow Decker Creative Marketing's client base, Boucher has also enriched the company's community outreach efforts. Support recipients include the Rob Bramham Foundation for families fighting leukemia, The Seeing Eye guide dog training program, The Connecticut Commission on Children, the Greater New Haven United Way, and the Riverfront Recapture effort to reconnect downtown Hartford with the Connecticut River.

Boucher also encourages Decker staffers to roll up their sleeves as a group to give back. Her team recently joined Team Cares, an international effort focused on the travel and lodging industry, to spend a day painting and landscaping at the Mystic Seaport Museum as the attraction prepared for its busy summer season.

For her clients, Boucher is willing to go the extra mile, whether it's getting to know their goals as intimately as possible, or putting her accounting background to work to watch every budget dollar.

"In our business, you have to adjust to new people and new personalities all the time," Makiaris says. "It's an educational process, and you have to really dig down initially before you go down that path together. Kathy takes the extra time to get acclimated. What I also admire about her is that she will show her clients how they can save money along the way, whether it's budgeting for a print job, or the entire project, she always presents options and opportunities."

Boucher says the advertising industry has changed over the years, and gone through several tough economic times, which has caused clients to become much more conservative with their spending.

"One of the keys to our business success has been financial transparency," Boucher said. "We manage our clients' budgets as if they were our own."

Work-life balance is a hot topic for women in business, including in Boucher's situation. As she has risen through the ranks at Decker, she has also been busy raising five children. Her own juggling act has led her to bring more working parents onto her staff.

"I am lucky to have a husband who supports my career and who has been a true partner in raising our children. The



*“We manage our clients' budgets as if they were our own.”*

key is planning out each day, while being agile enough to shift and change depending on family and work needs," she says. "At Decker we've employed many working parents and have found that by accommodating their personal priorities, we have happier and more productive employees."

On Decker's website, Boucher's profile says she is the "World's Most Productive Human," a title she has earned through her drive to offer exceptional work to her clients as well as unwavering support to her employees. Makiaris says her friend has been an inspiration to her in the way she can run her business, do a fantastic job and be an all-around great person.

"She's a great business partner and I love working with her," she says. "She has lots of energy and she knows how to use it."

### What are your keys to ...

#### Maintaining business success:

One of the keys to our business success has been financial transparency. Always striving to give our clients the best return on their marketing investment, we manage our clients' budgets as if they were our own. This requires a careful balance of right brain and left brain thinking - delivering break-through creative with a go-to marketing strategy that delivers results for our clients.

#### Keeping a competitive edge:

We've remained competitive by keeping current with what is going on in our industry, focusing on our core strategic and creative capabilities, and aligning with specialized partner companies, like Makiaris Media, to offer our clients best-in-class services. For every assignment, our clients get a customized team that delivers the best return on their marketing investment.

#### Who was an influential mentor in your professional life?

I believe the one person who has been most influential in my personal and professional life is my mother. She instilled in me the core values that drive me every day. In fact, they are our cultural drivers at Decker Creative Marketing, which we call the six senses: having a sense of pride, a sense of initiative, a sense of urgency, a sense of ethics, a sense of humor, and last but not least, having common sense.



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# Jill Rubin Hummel

President and General Manager  
Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield

## Hummel drives change in evolving healthcare industry

By David Medina

Special to the Hartford Business Journal

In 2010, as vice president of payment innovation at Anthem Inc., Jill Rubin Hummel spearheaded a company-wide effort to move from a fee-for-service payment model, in which healthcare providers are reimbursed for each office visit, to one in which they are reimbursed for helping patients manage their health on a continuing basis.

Although the concept is still evolving, it remains her crowning achievement. She envisions a day when technology will enable patients to receive most round-the-clock health services on an outpatient basis — even in their own homes — in the same way it enabled banks to offer 24-hour service.

"I'm incredibly proud of leading the team that helped Anthem get into that space," she said. "It was exciting. It was cutting edge and I felt like I was making a difference."

John Keith, principal at Deloitte Consulting, who worked on the project for Anthem, raved about the way Hummel engaged the company's technical, medical and financial experts in contributing to it.

"I've seen lots of people try to get things like this off the ground and very few of them succeed as well as Jill did," Keith said. "She has vision. She has incredible drive and she's disciplined."

Hummel made enough of an impression that she was named president and general manager of Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield's Connecticut office four years later, not unusual for a career business executive, but certainly for a woman who entered the profession after working 17 years as an attorney.

"It's a little bit of a circuitous route," she says. "The person who retired from this role before me was younger when he retired, than I was when I took this job."

Born in Brooklyn, N.Y., Hummel's family moved upstate to Corning, when she was 3 months old. But her parents divorced when she was 4, forcing her mother, who did not have a college degree, to move with Jill and her two brothers into her grandfather's apartment in Lefrak City, a giant working-class housing complex in Queens. Hummel lived there until she graduated high school. Her mother and role model, Margaret Brisbois, went on to earn a bachelor's degree, two master's degrees and become a teacher, all while raising three children alone.

"From a very young age, she impressed upon me the importance of being financially independent — that you shouldn't be dependent on a man," Hummel said. "She wanted me to get married and have a nice family life, but she didn't want me to have the kind of struggles that she had."

Hummel's mother also impressed on her that she was going to major in political science and attend law school, which she did, at the University of Rochester and at the Washington University School of Law in St. Louis, Mo.

Upon graduating from law school, Hummel and her husband, Zachary, whom she met while attending college, stayed in St. Louis. She specialized in healthcare law, including work as general counsel to a health maintenance organization, where she discovered she liked the business side of healthcare more than the legal side.

From then on she worked on building her professional portfolio to help make that shift and, in 2001, was hired to



**“There’s no such thing as work-life balance. You have to just make conscious choices. ”**

her first non-legal position at UnitedHealthcare, where she rose to Northeast regional vice president for network management. She joined Anthem in 2007 as a vice president in provider engagement and contracting.

"I felt there would be a good trajectory here for me to be successful because there were a number of very successful people at Anthem who were also 'recovering' attorneys," Hummel said.

She and her husband also found time to raise two sons and a daughter: Tristan, 29, a married artist living in Chicago; Kerri-gan, 25, who is studying for her master's in social work at Washington University; and Stefan, 21, a senior at Colgate University. They did it, she said, by adjusting their schedules so that one parent was always present and available to the children.

"There's no such thing as work-life balance. You have to just make conscious choices," she said. "If you asked my kids, I think they would say they didn't really feel they had a working mom because I was there."

### What are your keys to ...

#### Maintaining business success:

Five things immediately come to mind. First, attract and retain the best talent. Second, work hard and don't be afraid to roll up your sleeves. Third, act with integrity. Fourth, recognize that your success often depends on others inside or outside of your organization; ensure that they want you to be successful. Finally, love what you are doing.

#### Maintaining work-life balance:

I have workaholic tendencies so work-life balance doesn't come naturally to me. Early in my career, my work-life balance came in the form of three children. Though I might not take time away from work for myself, being a good and actively engaged mother who was present in the moments with them was my priority. With my children grown I found that I have to consciously and deliberately "schedule" balance. Today that means planning activities with my husband.

#### Keeping a competitive edge:

Maintaining a competitive edge is a marathon, not a sprint. It's important to be aware of what your competitors are doing, but not allow yourself to be overly influenced by it. Instead, build an organizational culture that creates a laser-sharp focus on the customer.

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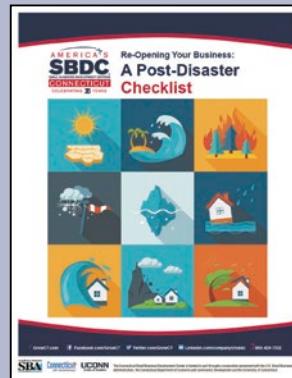
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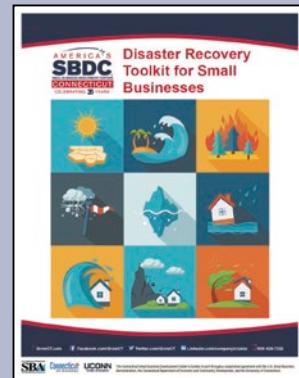
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# Connie Weaver

Executive Vice President,  
Chief Marketing Officer  
TIAA

## Weaver shapes messages that strengthen brands

By David Medina

Special to the Hartford Business Journal

Many business women have confronted offensive male managers. They have balanced full-time work schedules with full-time parenting and spent years at firms that paid them less than they deserved and offered few opportunities for advancement.

Connie Weaver is not one of them.

Weaver, executive vice president and chief marketing officer of TIAA (Teachers Insurance and Annuity of America), a retirement-services provider for individuals in the academic, research, medical and cultural fields, grew up in southern New Jersey, in a family of small business owners, who infused her with commerce know-how from a young age. Her father manufactured stockings and pantyhose. Her mother simultaneously operated a clothing store and a restaurant, and her grandmother ran a construction company. Weaver worked for all of them from the age of 13.

"When you grow up with that kind of exposure, you don't know that there are barriers because there aren't — and if you let something be a barrier, it will become debilitating," she says.

Weaver recently completed a four-year rebranding of her company, formerly known as TIAA-CREF, that attempts to demystify the financial planning process with a simplified marketing campaign, a shortened name, a new logo and a redesigned website. She ranks it as one of the greatest accomplishments of her career.

"When you're serving brilliant people, like professors, it doesn't make them feel very good when they read something and can't understand it," she said.

Weaver officially entered the workforce in 1975, after graduating from the University of Maryland with a degree in textile chemistry and business, as one of the very first female field representatives for the Martin Marietta Aluminum Co.

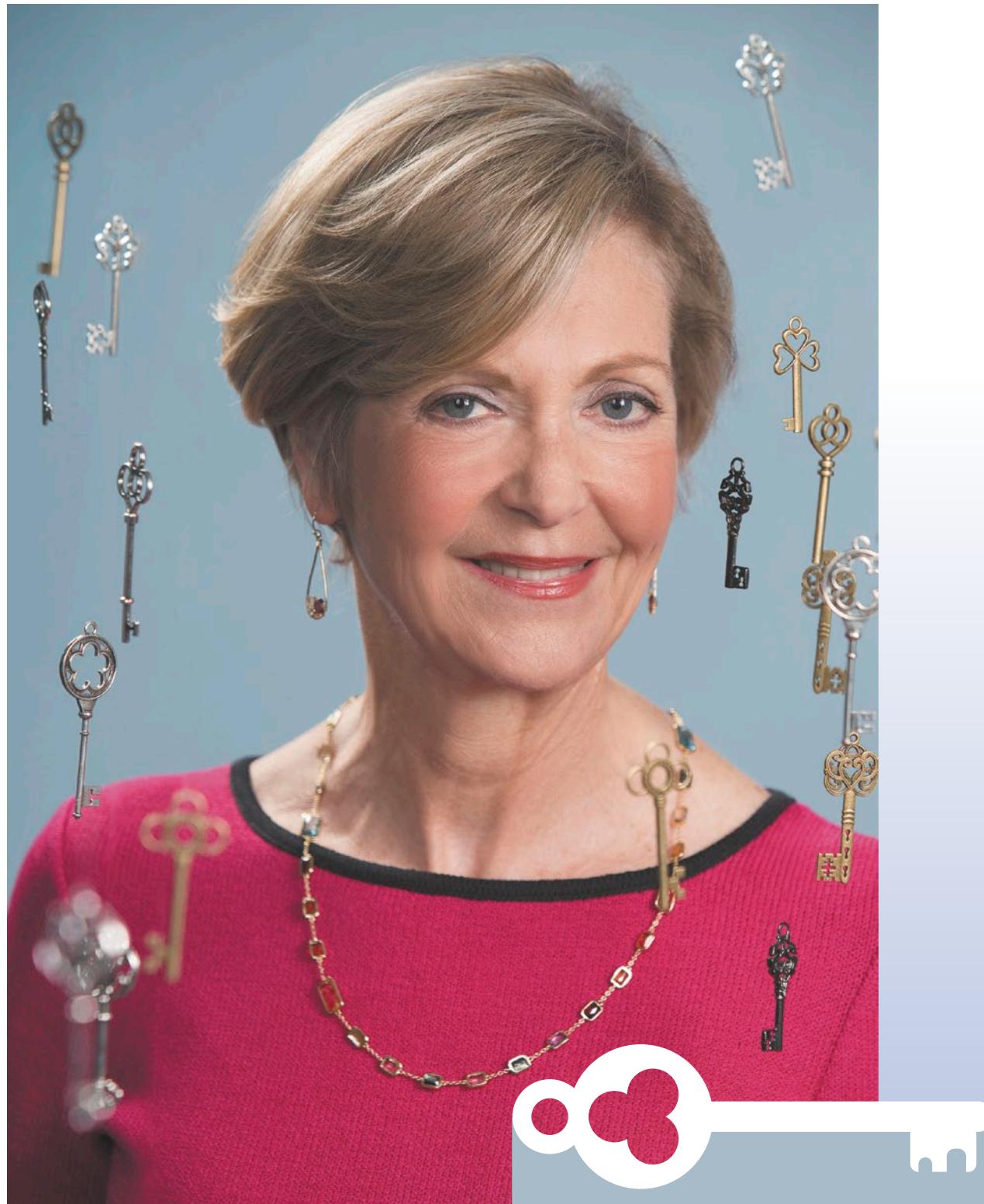
"Everybody wanted to meet the woman who sells aluminum," she said. "People would look at you and say 'My granddaughter is about your age' and you'd sit there and have to prove yourself."

She moved into the publishing industry within a year, first as a sales representative for Prentice-Hall Inc., where she got her first taste of marketing; then as marketing coordinator and sales manager at Harcourt Brace Jovanovich; and, finally, in several top marketing roles with McGraw Hill Inc., where she remained until 1990.

From there, Weaver shifted to the telecommunications industry. Over a 12-year span, she handled investor relations and financial communications at MCI Communications in Washington, D.C.; Microsoft Corp. in Seattle; and AT&T in Basking Ridge, N.J. In 2002, AT&T elevated her to executive vice president for public relations and marketing and tapped her to spearhead a brand transformation, similar to the one she just completed for TIAA. In 2005, Weaver moved on to the BearingPoint communications consulting firm as executive vice president and chief marketing officer. She remained there until 2008, when she accepted a position as senior vice president and chief marketing officer for The Hartford and moved to Connecticut. Within two years, a recruiter persuaded her to join TIAA-CREF.

"It's fascinating to move through different industries and recognize that people in business have so many similarities, whether you're in aluminum or energy or publishing or consulting or insurance," she said. "You learn to use the skills that you've acquired doing other things and apply them to a new situation."

Weaver adds that she has been blessed with a husband, David, who understood that her personal life has always been defined by the energy that she applies to business — "It's the



*“I never saw the glass ceiling the way others do.”*

way we were brought up" — and who, as an author and consultant, could work wherever her career happened to take them, "so long as he had access to a telephone and a computer."

Interestingly, the couple was so invested in the Greater Hartford community, when she began working at TIAA-CREF, they opted to stay here rather than move near the company headquarters in New York City. Weaver presently sits on the boards of Hartford Hospital, The University of St. Joseph, the University of Connecticut Foundation and the Bushnell Center for the Performing Arts, where, as chair of the marketing committee, she spearheaded a project to redefine The Bushnell with a new logo and visual identity, a new website and a stronger social-media presence.

"I never saw the glass ceiling the way others do," Weaver says. "If you couple that with an optimism — somebody who continually wants to learn new things and make an impact, that's who I am." ■

### What are your keys to ...

#### Maintaining business success:

My actions are always driven by the customer, and to serve the customer to the fullest, you need to understand their motivations and their goals at an emotional level.

#### Maintaining work-life balance:

I grew up in a family business, so my professional and personal lives were merged from an early age. I don't see work and life as either/or — I get a tremendous amount of satisfaction and purpose from both. My trick to keeping my personal relationships healthy during demanding professional times is through energy — I commit to giving an evening with my family the same level of energy I'd give to a meeting with the board of directors.

#### Who was an influential mentor in your professional life? Why?

I had the good fortune of meeting Harold "Terry" McGraw III, chairman emeritus of McGraw Hill, early in my career. He was more than a mentor. Terry was a true sponsor, giving me new opportunities, taking chances, and pushing me to develop new skills, including putting me onto assignments that were important to him and where he thought I might shine, even if they weren't intuitive to me at first. Great sponsors like Terry are invaluable—in my case, it led me to a career of taking chances with confidence.



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# Tizziana Fusco Weber

Senior Director, Communications  
Pratt & Whitney (UTC)

## CT roots firmly plant Weber at UTC

By David Medina

Special to the Hartford Business Journal

**T**izziana Weber, senior director of communications for Pratt & Whitney, has held several marketing and communication positions at the multiple business units that make up the United Technologies Corp. archipelago, during her 30-year career there.

She got her foot in the company door in 1984 as a college intern in UTC's newly created department of community relations, among the first departments of its kind in the country, under the direction of Lois Sabatino. Two years later, she was hired as a permanent employee and, from there, she moved on to increasingly greater responsibilities at Hamilton Standard propeller makers (now UTC Aerospace Systems), Otis elevator and escalators and, finally, at Pratt & Whitney. Along the way, she became one of the primary architects of UTC's corporate and social responsibility programs, helping to grow the company's presence in employee-volunteer projects, on nonprofit boards and financial contributions to charitable organizations. The Special Olympics, the Connecticut Valley Girls Scouts, Autism Families Connecticut, Junior Achievement and Goodwin College are but a few of the institutions that have benefitted from her efforts.

But when you ask Weber what gives her the most pride, she will tell you without hesitation that it is the life she shares with her husband Dana of 30 years and their two "strong, independent, bright, young" daughters, Maria, 22, who recently graduated from St. Michael's College in Vermont, and Alexa, 16, a sophomore at East Catholic High School in Manchester.

Born in Hartford to first-generation Italian immigrants William Fusco, a tailor, and his late wife, Maria, Weber and her two younger brothers, Dino and Anthony, spent their formative years living in a three-family home in the city's South End that was also inhabited by all of her other relatives.

"My cousins lived on the first two floors and we lived on the third floor. So, family has always been a big deal and is the cornerstone of who I am," she says, remembering how, as a young child, she would sit at the kitchen table doing homework, while her parents took night classes at Bulkeley High School to learn to speak English.

Weber's family later moved to Hebron, where she graduated from the regional district high school, but she has never veered very far from her native city. After high school, she attended the University of Hartford and earned a degree in journalism and organizational communications. From there, it was on to an MBA at the University of Connecticut. But it was the internship at UTC and Sabatino's influence that she says put her life and career in perspective. They remain very close to this day. Sabatino, now long retired, was at Weber's side when her mother passed away 30 years ago and is the godmother to one of her daughters.

"She's the daughter I never had," Sabatino says. "She is very sweet and very business-like at the same time. She knew where to draw the line as far as business and personal life was concerned."

Family unity was also instrumental in her husband Dana's decision to give up his own career in marketing after the birth of their second daughter and be a stay-at-home dad.

"Both of our careers were crazy and he determined that he wanted us to raise our kids versus having to raise them either through au pairs or different options," she said. "He's really been fantastic at doing that — making sure that everybody's where they need to be and that we're all giving the right amount of time to the right things."

Weber's sense of family extends even to her business relationships. Her greatest professional accomplishment, she says, is not



*“Someone was always there to give you a break, so it's up to you to give them a break.”*

in the many titles that she has held or the projects she has supervised, but in helping many individuals achieve their fullest potential, whether it be by staying with UTC or venturing into a new industry, in much the same way Sabatino helped her. Those she has helped include a number of young women who rose through the ranks to become fellow executives at the company.

"I have three principles I live by: Life is what you make it; treat others as you want to be treated; and pay it forward," she says. "Someone was always there to give you a break, so it's up to you to give them a break." ■

### What are your keys to ...

#### Maintaining business success:

Business, like life, is about building relationships and surrounding yourself with people who offer diverse views, skills and personalities. Business success is about being open, respecting new ideas and approaches and taking risks. It's about asking for help when you need it and providing it when others reach out to you for support. Having fun, loving what you do and sharing that passion with others who have the same drive, results in success for everyone involved.

#### Maintaining work-life balance:

Managing work and personal time is a juggling act and there are always tradeoffs. That said, I am fortunate to have a strong support system at home and work, and through planning and flexibility, I muddle through. I schedule vacation time early in the year and load my family activities and personal appointments as soon as they come up. A female executive counseled me early on to schedule family weekend events and stick to them.

#### Keeping a competitive advantage:

Surround yourself with people smarter than you then listen, watch and learn from them. Also, be open to new approaches, especially those outside of your industry, and determine if there is an application that can move your business objectives forward in a new way.

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## Women In Business 2016

### Judges



**Anne L. Elvgren** is president of Elvgren Associates, a business development consulting firm serving professional and financial services organizations and small businesses. Her services focus on activities that build brand awareness, drive revenue and develop long-term client relationships. Her background includes over 25 years of marketing and management experience and she previously served as chief marketing officer at Robinson & Cole and Blum-Shapiro. Elvgren is an active member in the MetroHartford Alliance and the Connecticut Business & Industry Association.



**Kristen L. Roberts** serves as the vice president of public relations and community investment for Comcast's Western New England Region. She is responsible for community investment and public relations initiatives and serves as a company spokesperson.

Roberts has held several leadership positions for professional and community organizations and currently serves as a trustee of Goodspeed Musicals, the Chamber of Commerce of Eastern Connecticut and is on the board of the Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce and Middlesex United Way.



**Anne Evans** is the director of the U.S. Department of Commerce International Trade Administration District Office in Middletown. She leads a team of business and trade professionals in assisting over 2,500 Connecticut companies grow their businesses and attract overseas customers.

Since her appointment as director she has led numerous state-wide training projects, business development initiatives and trade missions to Europe, Asia, the Middle East and South America. In her over 30 years in private industry she was the third generation in her family's Middletown tire business.



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# HARTFORD BUSINESS JOURNAL

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President, Trinity College  
**Dr. Rhona Free**  
President, University of Saint Joseph  
**Manon Cox**  
President + CEO, Protein Sciences  
**Susan Tully**  
President + General Manager,  
NBC Connecticut

Moderated By: **Jill Adams**  
Principal & CEO, Adams + Knight

**Kathy Boucher**

President and CEO,  
Decker Creative  
Marketing



**Tara Knapp**

Vice President of  
Development,  
PR and Marketing,  
Gaylord Specialty  
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**Mary Jo Olenick**

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